



Education Report: Urgent Response Fund for early learning services, schools and kura in 2019/20

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	4 June 2020	Priority:	High
Security Level:	Budget Sensitive	METIS No:	1230760
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek your urgent agreement that the \$2 million Urgent Response Fund made available by Cabinet for use in 2019/20 can be allocated immediately to early learning services, schools and kura with the greatest need, ahead of Government's announcement of the wider Wellbeing Budget package for supporting learners.

Recommendations

The Ministry of Education recommends that you:

- a. **Agree** that we begin immediate allocation of the 2019/20 \$2 million Urgent Response Fund to early learning services, schools and kura with the greatest need, ahead of Government's announcement of the wider Wellbeing Budget package

☒ **Agree** ☐ **Disagree**

- b. **Agree** that this Report will not be proactively released at this time because it is Budget sensitive.

☒ **Agree** ☐ **Disagree**


Katrina Casey
Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support


Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

04/06/2020

5 / 6 / 2020

Urgent Response Fund 2019/20

1. On 11 May 2020, Cabinet agreed to fund a package of initiatives across the education sector to support the wellbeing of learners, their family and whānau, and school staff in the wake of COVID-19. The package consists of initiatives that provide short-term support for immediate responses to the pandemic, longer-term initiatives to strengthen curriculum delivery and support positive whole of school/kura/early learning service learning environments, and improve access to wellbeing services for those who need it.
2. The Wellbeing Budget package includes \$52 million to establish an Urgent Response Fund for early learning services, schools and kura. This is made up of \$2 million in 2019/20 and \$50 million in 2020/21.
3. The Wellbeing Budget package including the Urgent Response Fund has yet to be announced by Government and is therefore Budget Sensitive.
4. We are seeking your urgent agreement that the Ministry's regional offices can begin to allocate the \$2 million available in 2019/20 to early learning services, schools and kura with the greatest level of COVID-19 related wellbeing needs. We intend to do this using an existing Ministry funding process (Special Reasons) which provides additional, as-needed funding for exceptional or unforeseen circumstances.
5. By starting allocation, we seek to ensure the Urgent Response Fund is utilised by 30 June 2020 for immediate support for wellbeing issues experienced by children and young people as a result of COVID-19, as intended by Cabinet.
6. If you agree to this approach, the Ministry's regional Directors of Education would identify early learning services, schools and kura with specific needs to allocate the funding. In line with the existing Ministry Special Reasons funding process, the purpose and value of the fund would not be publicised.
7. We will provide you a separate report about the wider Wellbeing Budget package announcement.

Proactive release

8. We recommend that this Report is not proactively released at this time because it is Budget sensitive.